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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda
Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

List of issues and questions in relation to the combined fourth to seventh periodic reports of Trinidad and Tobago

Addendum

Replies of Trinidad and Tobago*

[Date received: 9 March 2016]

Note: The present document is being circulated in English, French and Spanish only.

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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Please recycle

Constitutional, legislative and policy framework

Question 1

1. Trinidad and Tobago has taken measures to incorporate the provisions of the Convention within domestic legislation provided in the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh Combined Periodic Report at page 81. This legislation provides a fundamental basis for Gender and Human Rights in Trinidad and Tobago.

2. The legislation to be amended is currently being reviewed and the submission of the fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh Combined Periodic Report will help advance the process to achieve the standards of the Convention.

3. In 2009, the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development was laid in Parliament as a Green Paper and a period of six (6) months was allotted for the receipt of public comments. In 2010, there was a change in Government. That Government in 2011 established a Technical Coordinating Committee comprising of representatives of government ministries, non-governmental organizations, academia, religious organizations and the media to review the comments on the Green Paper, conduct further consultations and submit a revised draft document. That document was submitted in June 2012.

4. Cabinet subsequently requested further consultations and based on those consultations, a report was forwarded to Cabinet. The main areas of concern were the fluidity of the definition of gender and the inclusion of matters related to sexual orientation and the determination of pregnancy in the document. Through these consultations, there was consensus that the issue of sexual orientation and termination of pregnancy can be included in the document within the context of non-discrimination against people of varying sexual orientation and the need for public education as it relates to the termination of pregnancy.

5. In relation to the fluidity on the definition of gender, it was argued that the definition used in the Rome Statute of the Criminal Court was the preferred definition.

6. The Draft National Policy on Gender and Development required amendments which needed Cabinet's approval. However, as a result of the change in administration in 2015, this process was delayed. At the end of the term of office of the government in 2015, no final decision was made on these matters.

7. The current government which came into office in September 2015 indicated in its Manifesto and Medium Term Policy Framework that "the 2009 Draft National Policy on Gender and Development will be used in all activities of government and civil society, thereby promoting the full and equal participation of men and women in the development process". Following a presentation to the Minister of State (with the responsibility for Gender and Child Affairs) on the policy process, a decision was made to proceed with the 2012 version instead of the 2009 Draft National Policy on Gender and Development. To date, that draft was further amended to include updated statistics and emerging issues, for example, climate change. The revised document was submitted to Cabinet for approval in the first quarter of 2016.

8. It is anticipated at the time of the presentation to the Committee in July 2016, the document will be close to finalization.

9. There was no previously approved National Policy on Gender and Development.

Question 2

10. Section 4 of the Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedoms to be protected and enjoyed without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex. Further, section 14 of the Constitution states that where any person alleges that such rights have been, are being or are likely to be contravened in relation to him, that person may apply to the High Court for redress by way of originating motion. Thus, the High Court has the power of enforcement in relation to the violation of constitutional rights.

11. The Equal Opportunity Act, 2000 seeks to protect persons against discrimination as it relates to employment, education, the provision of goods and services and the provision of accommodation. Under the Act, citizens are entitled to equality and fair treatment regardless of differing status such as sex, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, marital status or disability.

12. Section 26 of the Act establishes the Equal Opportunity Commission which seeks to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different statuses generally. The Commission is responsible, among other things, for receiving and investigating allegations of discrimination within the scope of the Act, and as far as possible, facilitating the conciliation of those allegations. Where conciliation has failed or where it may be inappropriate in the circumstances, the Commission may refer the matter to the Equal Opportunity Tribunal. The Tribunal is also established under the Act with a view to adjudicating matters referred to it by the Commission.

13. Trinidad and Tobago as a dualist state uses domestic legislation to protect the rights of women. An example of where the domestic legislation has been invoked to protect the rights of women can be seen in the Sexual Offences Act, 1986 which deals with the punishment of all kinds of sexual crimes including procuration, abduction and prostitution of persons. This Act expressly uses gender neutral language when defining the offences covered under it so as to ensure that any person can be protected or prosecuted accordingly. In relation to the offence of rape, in section 4 of the Act, the victim and the offender are not identified by gender. As such, the law recognizes that this offence is not limited to a specific gender and allows for the prevention and prosecution of violence regardless of the gender identity of the victim or offender.

14. Another example of a good practice is in section 2 of the Act which defines "grievous sexual assault" to be the penetration of the vagina or anus of the complainant. As such, a person of any gender can claim an action against such an assault regardless of gender identity.

15. The Domestic Violence Act, 1999 makes provisions for the application and issue of Protection Orders for the protection of victims of domestic violence. Section 4 of the Act identifies who may be an applicant for a Protection Order by using gender neutral words such as inter alia "spouse", "member of household", "dependant", "child", "parent" or "sibling." The intention of the Act is to give as wide a protection as possible as it does not limit an applicant (victim) or a respondent (offender) by gender.

16. This Offences against the Person Act, 1925 relates to the punishment of all kinds of offences against the person such as inter alia homicide, assaults and acts causing or tending to cause danger to life or bodily harm. Offences covered under this Act also use gender neutral language, thus recognising that violent acts may occur against any gender or combination thereof. An example under this Act can be seen in section 30 relating to the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm. Section 30 states:

> "Any person who is convicted upon an indictment of any assault occasioning actual bodily harm is liable to imprisonment for five years; and any person who is convicted upon an indictment for a common assault is liable to a fine of four thousand dollars and to imprisonment for two years".

17. In 2005, the Offences against the Person Act was amended to include the offence of harassment. As indicated above, these provisions also use gender neutral language. Section 30A of the Act defines harassment as a person alarming or causing another person distress by engaging in a course of conduct that causes the other person to fear that violence will be used against him. The Act also broadly defines a "course of conduct" and includes inter alia, "following, making visual recordings of, stopping or accosting the person; watching, loitering near or hindering or preventing access to or from the person's place of residence, workplace or any other place frequented by the person".

National machinery for the advancement of women

Question 3

18. Following the change of Government which occurred in September 2015, the Gender Affairs Division was placed under the purview of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. In November 2015, following concerns expressed by various sectors of the national community and the Prime Minister's re-evaluation of the portfolios of women and children, the Gender and Child Affairs Units were re-assigned to the Office of the Prime Minister, and a dedicated Minister assigned to that portfolio.

19. It should be noted that there were no changes to the budgetary allocation despite the changes described in Paragraph 21 above from Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development to the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (Gender and Child Affairs Division).

20. As a consequence of the recession Trinidad and Tobago is experiencing, all ministries/agencies were advised to reduce the overall expenditure by seven percent (7 per cent) of their total allocations. Although this can impact on the execution of specific programmes, it also requires the Division to work strategically with donor agencies as well as civil society organizations and to establish creative methodologies in the execution of its mandate.

21. The amount of money given to the Division has remained fairly consistent between 2012 and 2015, with a substantial portion of its budgetary allocation being dedicated to annual subventions to Non-Governmental Organizations, shelters and Civil Society Groups. The table below details the Division's budgetary allocations for these years. This indicates that the Division is at least expected to maintain its level of output.

Year	*NPI (TTD)*	*Annual Subventions*
2012	9 000 000	5 193 227
2013	8 007 208	5 193 227
2014	10 000 000	5 193 227
2015	10 000 000	5 193 227

Achievements:

- Development of the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) Toolkit was done through a series of consultations, focus groups and workshops with ministry officials and civil society. Additionally, with the support of the Commonwealth Secretariat, an external consultant from South Africa was sourced to finalize the toolkit and to bring it in line with international standards;
- Training of technical staff of project and budget divisions of twenty-two (22) government ministries;
- Political will — Cabinet approval was granted to institutionalize GRB in Trinidad and Tobago. An action plan was developed to guide the implementation process;
- Meetings with senior officials of the budget divisions of the Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Planning and Development; and
- Securing the commitment of financial and technical resources from international partners, for example, the Commonwealth Secretariat.

22. The Government proposes to pilot GRB in five (5) Government Ministries namely: Health, Education, Social Development, Labour and National Security.

Challenges:

- Movement of gender focal points from one ministry to the next resulting in the need for training of new gender focal points; and
- Changes in government administration resulted in the need to orient Ministers and government officials on GRB and its importance to the national community.

23. Currently, given the challenges to fully implement GRB, the Government is unable to provide information on the implementation of the protocol on gender budgeting and its impact, particularly in the areas of social protection, reproductive health and adult literacy.

Temporary special measures

Question 4

24. There is no legislative framework which seeks to ensure that there are certain percentages of women in decision-making bodies. Action on this issue would require a policy decision. While such legislation does not exist, this does not preclude the country from having women in decision-making bodies. Trinidad and Tobago had its first female Prime Minister and has had a number of women in

Cabinet. Within the present Government of Trinidad and Tobago, there are eight women who serve as Members of Parliament.

25. In 2010, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in an attempt to institute temporary measures to accelerate the realization of the de facto equality of women with men stated in its Policy Framework its intention to:

- Ensure that the language of the legislation and public documents is gender sensitive;
- Champion the rights of women and mandate that women be adequately represented in the boards of all state-related entities and as commissioners in all statutory boards; and
- Enact specific legislation to combat sexual harassment in the workplace, enforced by a Sexual Harassment commission attached to the Ministry of Labour.

26. Additionally, the Government has approved the establishment of the National Commission on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equity.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

Question 5

27. In Trinidad and Tobago, there is no specific legislation or policy that defines or prevents stereotyping. The Equal Opportunity Act, 2000 which establishes the Equal Opportunity Commission and the Equal Opportunity Tribunal, plays a role in enforcement. The Commission and the Tribunal act as complaint mechanisms, whereby persons may seek redress through these institutions where it is alleged that they may be victims of certain kinds of discrimination. The types of discrimination applicable to the Act include discrimination in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services and the provision of accommodation. Under these main headings, discrimination is prohibited on the ground of status, by victimization or offensive behaviour. The meaning of "status" under the Act is defined in relation to a person as "the sex; the race; the ethnicity; the origin, including geographical origin; the religion; the marital status; or any disability of that person".

28. The Sedition Act, 1920 provides for the punishment of seditious acts and seditious libel, to facilitate the suppression of seditious publications and to provide for the temporary suspension of newspapers containing seditious matter. Under this Act, a "seditious intention" includes among other things, an intention "to engender or promote feelings of ill-will towards, hostility to or contempt for any class of inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago distinguished by race, colour, religion, profession, calling or employment".

29. Notwithstanding that the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development is yet to receive final approval, successive Governments through the Draft Policy have indicated an intention to treat with the issue of modifying baseline behaviour via a number of means and across a number of sectors. These include making changes at the governmental level, in non-governmental institutions, and addressing the representations made of women and men via the media.

30. The Draft Policy proposes efforts to frame unpaid work within family contexts as vital to the functioning and survival of the family unit, highlighting the importance of the women who engage exclusively in this activity. This is also a matter of promoting equality within households, especially where the leadership and decision-making roles of women are concerned. In terms of education, the Draft Policy emphasizes its centrality as a formal and informal site of gender socialisation. Among several other issues, it focuses on the gender differentials that affect enrolment and performance in and completion of programmes, and the gender biases reflected in curriculum development and teacher training. It posits the construction of a monitoring and evaluation framework that would be the result of extensive capacity building activity, aimed at identifying and resolving problems with the implementation of the policy if any should arise.

Achievements

31. The Defining Masculinity Excellence Programme (DME) was specifically designed for men and boys and is aimed at stemming the tide of problems often associated with the negative perceptions of masculinity. The Programme explored such issues as gender sensitivity, self-esteem, male friendship, father and son bond, masculinity in the workplace, spirituality, men and their feelings and men and their life partners.

32. Between its inception in 2003 and the present, approximately three thousand, four hundred (3,400) men were trained. Persons trained included senior officials of the Trinidad and Tobago Defence Force, middle managers of the Police Service, Teachers, Students, Trade Unions, Trinidad and Tobago Prisons Service, members of the public and employment agencies that employ large amount of male employees.

33. In addition to the fourteen (14) module classroom sessions, a radio programme was also established on two frequencies to extend the reach of the programme so that more persons would gain exposure to DME content. This programme was evaluated by UN-Women and was observed to be a best practice. Recommendations were made in respect of the enhancement of the programme and measures have been taken to gradually introduce these recommendations.

Challenges

34. Culturally-entrenched notions of masculinity and femininity often impacted on sustaining the changed behaviour over long term period of time.

35. Financial constraints impacted on the number of programmes that could be conducted in a fiscal year given that a maximum of forty (40) persons could be trained in one cohort.

36. The facilitation of the DME Programme was copyrighted by one service provider therefore limiting the number of programmes that could be conducted in a given period.

37. In the short-term, men expressed their interest in the "Gender on Your Agenda" Programme through the call-in session and feedback directly to the Division. Several men requested assistance in helping them to treat with their stereotypical perceptions and attitudes regarding the roles of women in society and as a consequence the Division partnered with a Non-Governmental Organization, Families in Action, to establish in Arima, a Resource Centre for Men and Boys.

Amongst the services/programmes that were provided at this venue, included counselling, workshop specifically targeting young males fourteen and over; food preparation and home management programme for men and boys; and domestic violence workshops.

38. To produce and air the television series proved very costly to maintain and thus a sustained impact could not be achieved.

Question 6

39. The inconsistency between the age of consent to marriage in the Marriage Act and in the age of a child in the Children Act is currently being examined with a view to bringing the legislation to the standard of the Convention. This requires further public consultation.

40. In November 2011, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago conducted a Stakeholder Consultation on the Standardization of the Legal Age of Marriage in Trinidad and Tobago. Additionally, meetings were held with the Heads of Religious Organizations in reference to the specific marriage Acts. A report on the consultations and discussions were forwarded to the Ministry of Legal Affairs for further action.

41. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is cognisant of the significant gap between the ages of consent to sexual activity reflected in the Children Act, 2012 (age 18 for sexual penetration and age 16 for sexual touching) and the ages at which children are permitted to marry under the country's various marriage statutes. The Government is further cognisant of the intersecting rights of the child which are in question, namely, the right of the child to protection against sexual abuse which the Children Act, 2012 affords and those other rights of the child such as the right to education and health which are in conflict with under-age marriage.

42. Trinidad and Tobago is a multi-cultural, multi-religious society and the different marriage Acts is an example of the efforts of the State to manage diverse cultural and religious demands for recognition and inclusion in the nation state. Consultation with the various religious bodies and their agreement to abolish under-age marriage is necessary before the Government can act legislatively to increase and harmonize the age of marriage across the four statutes. Approximately, over the past two decades, the Government has engaged in consultations with these bodies but has not succeeded in achieving a consensus. Taking all these issues into consideration and particularly the urgent need to strengthen the law to address child sexual abuse, the Government adopted the policy position reflected in the Children Act, 2012. Marriage is therefore an exception to relevant sexual offences under the 2012 Act. However, non-consensual activity by a married spouse is governed by the Sexual Offences Act, 1986. The government will continue its efforts to address the challenges and will also engage in further dialogue and consultations with religious bodies and the society at a large.

43. The Sexual Offences Act, 1986 section 9 states that a person commits the offence of incest knowing that another person is by blood relationship, his or her parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, niece, aunt or nephew, as the case may be, has sexual intercourse with that person.

44. The Cabinet Note and Report on the Legal Age of Marriage were submitted to Cabinet for review and approval. Further consultations with the various religious bodies must be a priority to facilitate this change within the relevant marriage Acts.

45. As noted earlier, the Children Act, 2012 stipulates marriage as an exception to the offences of sexual penetration, sexual touching and causing a child to watch a sexual act. Non-consensual conduct is dealt with under the Sexual Offences Act, 1986. The Children Act, 2012 also stipulates a marriage exception for the offence of engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child in accordance with section 27, that is, the marriage exception applies if there were only two persons involved and they are or believed on reasonable grounds that they were lawfully married. The Children Act, 2012 introduced a wider and more comprehensive range of offences to address sexual conduct against children. It does not, however, specify an offence of incest which is retained under the Sexual Offences Act, 1986 and which has been modified to specify a single penalty of life imprisonment. Sexual penetration may nevertheless be charged under the Children Act, 2012 since a child's consent is irrelevant. The maximum penalty for sexual penetration is also life imprisonment.

Violence against women

Question 7

46. There is an existing legal framework which seeks to provide not only protection for women against violence but also make provision for the prosecution of same in our courts. The definition of domestic violence is stated in section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act (27 of 1999) (as amended). It was enacted 12th October 1999. It states:

> "Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional or psychological or financial abuse committed by a person against a spouse, child, any other person who is a member of the household or dependent."

47. Section 3 of the Domestic Violence Act defines "physical abuse" as any act or omission which causes physical injury and includes the commission of or an attempt to commit any of the offences listed in the First Schedule.

48. The First Schedule includes offences under the Summary Offences Act (No. 31 of 1921) such as various kinds of assaults, battery, and disturbances of the peace; offences under the Offences Against the Person Act (No. 10 of 1925) including among other things, homicide, shooting or wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm, administering poison with intent to cause grievous bodily harm, attempting to choke, or procuring an abortion; offences under the Children Act (No. 4 of 1925) including cruelty to children and seduction and prostitution of girls; and offences under the Sexual Offences Act (No. 27 of 1986) which includes all kinds of sexual assaults and rape against persons.

49. Apart from the legislative framework, Non-Governmental Organizations provide eleven Shelters for female victims of domestic violence, and a Rape Crisis Centre. Counselling services, support groups and resource facilities are also available within communities to assist in the prevention and treatment of domestic violence. The National Domestic Violence Unit, featuring 24 hours, seven days a week Hotline was restructured in September 2004, with additional human and physical resources and functions to this date within the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service. It is geared toward victims of rape, spousal abuse, and other forms of violence against women and men. Police officers are continuously being trained to deal with persons who are affected by domestic violence.

50. If a person fails to fulfil the terms of a protection order, he/she commits an offence under Section 20 of the Domestic Violence Act, 1999. For a first time breach, the penalty is a maximum fine of $9,000.00 or in default, a maximum of three months in prison. On a second breach, the maximum fine is $15,000.00 or in default, imprisonment for a period of 24 months. The fine and imprisonment can be a combined form of punishment. Finally, if after the second conviction the respondent again breaches the terms of the order, the magistrate can sentence him/her to a maximum of five years imprisonment.

51. The following are measures being taken to ensure the effective protection of women who are victims of violence:

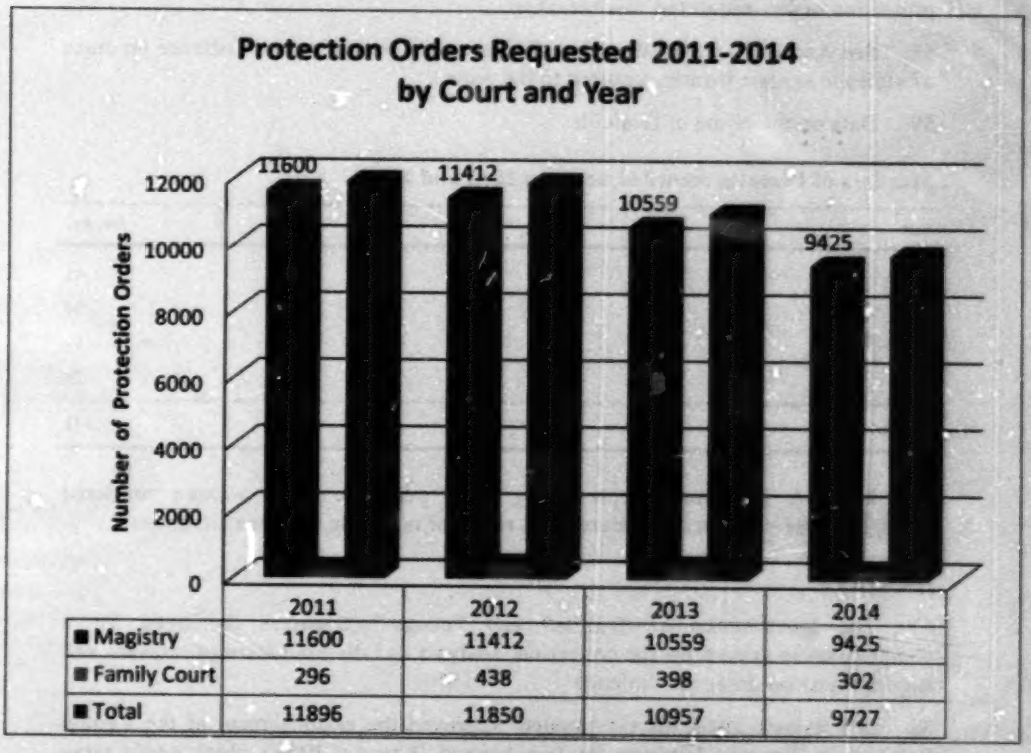
- Strengthening of the Domestic Violence Unit and National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-SAVE;
- Construction of additional Domestic Violence Shelters;
- Counselling Services;
- Legal Aid Services; and
- Continued support for existing Domestic Violence Shelters and NGOs who provide services to victims of domestic violence in the form of one-off grants and subventions.

52. The government in an effort to eliminate difficulties experienced by women in obtaining protection orders has recently undertaken a Review of the Domestic Violence Act and is currently considering several recommendations which were offered during the review process.

53. Among the recommendations received and which are most likely to receive favourable considerations are:

- The Act should be extended to dating relationship;
- Children in institutional care should be afforded protection under the Act against abuse committed by caregivers and others at institution;
- The 12-month restriction placed on a visiting relationship should be removed. It should be for the Court to determine whether a relationship so qualifies;
- A Court convicting an accused of a grave "domestic violence" offence should be given the discretion to make a Protection Order unless the victim objects to the Order being made. The Court may prescribe the duration as it deems necessary and should not be limited to the maximum duration of three years specified in the Act;
- The Act should make provision for officers-in-charge at all police stations to have access to the National Domestic Violence Register. A person who has reasonable cause to believe that his/her married or unmarried partner as defined in the Act has a past history of domestic violence should be entitled to apply for such information before any violence occurs or escalates. The police should also be mandated to review the cases at quarterly intervals for at least one year following the making of a complaint;
- All intimate partner relationships should be protected under the domestic violence legislation irrespective of sex or marital status;

- It was unanimously agreed that the power to make an interim emergency Protection Order should be conferred on a police officer. The specific recommendation from one public consultation was that this should be limited to circumstance where there was actual or a grave risk of violence and danger to the lives of victims and their children; and
- The urgent need for training of police officers, proper supervision of the service of notice of proceedings (and summons in criminal cases) and for adequate resources to be made available to the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service in order to minimize delays in the service of notice of proceedings/ summons.



	2011	2012	2013	2014
Magistry	11600	11412	10559	9425
Family Court	296	438	398	302
Total	11896	11850	10957	9727

Number of Breaches and Arrest of Protection Orders 2011-2014

	Applications for Protection Orders	*Number of Breaches*	*Number of Arrests*
2011	11896	284	153
2012	11850	334	140
2013	10957	232	104
2014	9727	221	125

54. The total number of protected orders requested between the years 2011 to 2014 was 44,430.

55. Approximately 3.3 per cent of the applications were filed at the Family Court while the remaining 96.7 per cent were filed at the Magistrates' Court. There was a continual downward trend in the number of applications during the reference period.

56. From 2011 to 2012, the number of protection orders requested declined by 0.39 per cent; from 2012 to 2013, it declined by 7.54 per cent; and from 2013 to 2014, it declined by 11.34 per cent.

57. Data from the Crime and Problems Analysis Branch of the Trinidad and Tobago Police Service reveals that protection order breaches ranged from 221 to 334 for the same reference period which is an average of 268 per year, and the number of arrests for breaches averaged 132 per year. An average of 2.4 per cent of protection orders requested was breached.

58. See **Annex I** for statistical data disaggregated by age, type of offence on cases of violence against women reported to the police.

59. Data on the crime of femicide:

Murders of Females recorded between 2012 and 2015

Year	*Murders*
2012	41
2013	34
2014	41
2015	25
Total	**141**

60. In 2014, 15 women, representing 36.59 per cent of the women murdered throughout the year, were murdered as a result of domestic violence situations.

Question 8

61. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago recognizes the need for a comprehensive system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant and accurate data on domestic violence.

62. In February 2014, the Government approved the establishment of the Central Registry on Domestic Violence for Trinidad and Tobago (CRDV) which would serve to collect and integrate information relating to any person who is a victim or perpetrator of a domestic violence offence. To implement this project, Cabinet agreed to the establishment of a Technical Coordinating Committee comprising representatives of the State sector, the Judiciary and non-governmental organizations.

63. The CRDV is expected to strengthen current surveillance systems and assist in the development of targeted invention strategies to address the problem of domestic violence.

64. The anticipated outcomes of the Central Registry include:

- Provision of a more efficient and effective method of monitoring domestic violence in Trinidad and Tobago;

- Quick identification of past victims/perpetrators of abuse;
- Enhancement of effective evidence-based policy and programme development;
- Enabling the early identification of needs, timely responses and effective, holistic intervention strategies through the ability to review historical data, trend analyses and other statistical reporting tools;
- Improvement in communication/collaboration among practitioners by the provision of access to historical data/information from a trusted source; and
- Reduction of duplication of services by informing practitioners of all agencies involved with a case and by extension, duplication of cost of service delivery.

65. The Central Registry on Domestic Violence will become operational by March 2016. The Government has acquired the software system for the purpose of the collection, analysis and dissemination of data relating to domestic violence. The end user (service provider) has been trained in the use of the software. Hardware has been distributed to various NGOs who are included in the CRDV. Six agencies are currently engaged in the testing mode of software. It is proposed that an additional six (6) agencies will be incorporated over the next year. It should be noted that the Judiciary, Police Service and the Ministry of Health are also part of the process.

66. Information recorded/collected would include but would not be limited to the following areas:

- Demographics of client (age, sex, race, ethnicity, religion, area of residence, education, employment status, relationship to victim, marital status);
- Family members of clients;
- Detailed case notes on clients;
- Referrals — Documenting the organization to which clients are referred;
- Enrolments — Documentation of programme outcomes;
- Date, time, location and nature of incident; and
- Perpetrator information.

67. Although a review of the Sexual Offences Act has not been commissioned, the need for such action, whether with a view to amendment or outright repeal and replacement, has been recognized by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

68. The Family Court itself does not provide mediation services for victims of domestic violence. Instead, it refers these cases to National Family Services (NFS) for counselling because most times the victim is traumatized by the abuse. Efforts are underway, however, to create a division of Family Court that deals exclusively with family and child issues, including domestic violence. Particulars of this initiative have been brought to the attention of Parliament, and are currently being reviewed. The Family Court, however, continues to administer protection for women and children via Maintenance Orders, Access Orders, Fit Person's Orders, provision of child supervision and access to Safe Homes.

Question 9

69. The Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Diversity, the Environment and Sustainable Development of the Parliament, in recognizing the need to address gender based violence, particularly the programmes and services which provide support to victims of domestic violence, invited the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry responsible for treating with the issues of gender based violence (the former Ministry of Gender, Youth and Child Development now under the Office of the Prime Minister) to a public hearing in May 2015 to answer questions on the efforts made and proposed actions to address this problem.

70. Emerging from this public hearing the Parliament provided clear recommendations on particular areas to be addressed. The Government is currently working on implementing the recommendations made by the Committee.

71. On 31 January 2014, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago entered into a partnership with UN-Women for the Implementation of the Project "Strengthening State Accountability and Community Action for Ending Gender Based and Sexual Violence in Trinidad and Tobago". This project focuses specifically on reducing violence against women through strategies aimed at increasing state actor competencies, strengthening accountability and the promotion of social and cultural change through youth-led, gender responsive social communications.

72. A Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) was established to oversee the implementation of the project. A participatory baseline review of legislative, policy and programmatic action to address gender based violence was conducted and a report submitted to the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services. National Consultations, Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews with Government and Civil Society Organizations were conducted during the period June to July 2015 to inform the development of a National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP). A Final Project Report and National Strategic Action Plan (NSAP) inclusive of budget were submitted and will be forwarded shortly to Cabinet for its approval.

73. The NSAP outlines the framework for the effective multi-sectoral responses to sexual and gender-based violence.

74. There are nine shelters, providing 132 bed spaces, operating in Trinidad and Tobago. They are funded via subventions or one-off grants from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and donations from private individuals, non-governmental organizations and denominational bodies.

75. In addition to funding, the Government provides technical support and assists in institutional capacity-building initiatives. The Government is currently in the process of establishing two safe houses, one for male victims of domestic violence, and one for their female victims. Three additional buildings were acquired and are being refurbished to be used as domestic violence shelters (family units) for families with boys over the age of nine (9) who are not normally accommodated at existing shelters. They will operate on a 24-hour basis and provide intervention and support services as needed.

Trafficking

Question 10

76. On the 2 January 2013, the Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011 came into force by proclamation. The Act also establishes a Counter Trafficking Unit (CTU) which began operations in January 2013 together with the proclamation with the Act. As the Unit remains a fairly new infrastructure the requested information and disaggregated data does not exist. The CTU continues to function and the data would be forthcoming.

Trafficking in Persons Statistics

	2013		*2014*		*2015*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Under 18	0	0			1	1
18 to 29	2	9	1	4		7
30 to 49		1				
50 and Over		1				
Total Cases	2	11	1	4	1	8
Number of persons charged		0		0		7

	2013		*2014*		*2015*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Guyana	2		1	1	1	
Venezuela		4		3		6
Columbia		5				
Trinidad and Tobago						1
Dominican Republic		2				1
Total Cases	2	11	1	4	1	8

77. Human Trafficking Activity in Trinidad and Tobago since establishment of the CTU:

2013

- 1 female for domestic servitude (Colombian national, 52 yrs.)
- 2 males for labour exploitation (Guyanese nationals, ages 25 and 20)
- 2 females for labour exploitation (Guyanese national, ages 28 and 26)
- 8 females for sexual exploitation — 4 Colombians (32, 25, 31, 19); 2 Venezuelans (22 and 19); 2 Dominican Republic nationals (nfd)

2014

- 1 male and 1 female for labour exploitation (Guyanese nationals, ages 21 and 25)
- 3 females for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan nationals, ages 20, 21, 22)

2015

February

- 3 females for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan nationals, ages 26, 29 and 28)
- 1 female for sexual exploitation (Dominican Republic national, age 25)

July

- 1 male child victim for labour exploitation (Guyanese national, age 17) — case referred to Labour Inspectorate for labour violations

October

- 1 adult female for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan national, age 20)

November

- 1 female child for sexual exploitation (Trinidad and Tobago national, age 17)
- 2 females for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan nationals, ages 25 and 27)

2016

January

- 2 females for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan nationals, ages 23)

February

- 1 possible female for sexual exploitation (Venezuelan national, age 22)
- 1 male Guyanese national for labour exploitation (Guyanese national, age 38)

78. In 2015, ten persons were charged and one (1) person charged to date in 2016.

79. Information in respect of the request for an update on the efforts to adopt and implement a gender responsive national plan on child labour will be provided in a subsequent submission given the additional time needed to compile the information.

Participation in political and public life

Question 11

80. The Government has proposed, through the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development, to address the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, including national and local governance, the public and private sectors, and the community. This will provide a framework for the implementation of active and visible measures to significantly increase the number of women in power and decision-making, utilizing their talents and skills as politicians, top-level managers, policy-makers, diplomats and leaders in all areas of political, economic, social and cultural life.

81. Policy measures proposed include:

- The promotion of gender balance in power and decision-making positions at all levels and in all sectors, including, inter alia, parliament, governmental bodies, the judiciary, political parties, the private sector, national corporations, employers' organizations, trade unions, research and academic institutions, among others, in order to achieve transformational leadership and democracy, transparent and accountable governance, and social justice;
- The collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-disaggregated data on decision-making at all levels, with a view to promoting women's increased access to the full range of positions of power and decision-making;
- The promotion of the equal recruitment of women and men and the sustained examination of structures and procedures, in order to remove all barriers that directly and indirectly discriminate against their full participation in decision-making and governance across all sectors;
- The promotion of transformational and inter-generational leadership through the development of gender awareness?, career enhancement and personal development programmes for women and men that include career planning, tracking, mentoring, coaching, training and retraining to equip them to achieve equitable access to leadership, managerial, entrepreneurial and technical positions;
- The recognition and promotion of shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men in the family (in all its forms) to enable women's increased participation in positions of power and decision-making, and implementation of appropriate measures that support the reconciliation of family and public life.
- Encouraging the positive media portrayal of women as leaders, creative and innovative human beings, and key contributors and beneficiaries of the development process, rather than as sexual objects and inferior beings.

Percentages of women involved in politics, governance and decision-making

Year	*Women in House of Representatives (elected)*	*Women in Senate (nominated)*
1995	11.1	29.0
2002	19.4	32.3
2007	26.8	41.9
2010	28.6	25.8
2015	31.0	30.0

82. In 2015, a critical mass was achieved with regard to the number of women elected to serve in the House of Representatives and the number appointed to the Senate. It is expected that this upward trend will continue.

83. At the local government level, a critical mass has also been achieved with 32 per cent of the representatives elected in 2013 being women; forty-four of one hundred and thirty-six seats were won by female candidates.

84. There are no plans, and there is no discussion, nationally or otherwise, regarding the introduction of a quota system. However, the statistics for January 2013 as stated in the Report have changed. As at December 2015, the Inter-Parliamentary Union's world classification of women elected to parliament ranks Trinidad and Tobago as 34th with an increase from 28.6 per cent to 31.0 per cent representation in the Lower House or House of Representatives and an increase from 22.6 per cent to 32.3 per cent representation in the Upper House or Senate. This means that the representation of women in public life has now attained the minimum threshold of 30 per cent in respect of the representation of women in Parliament.

Education

Question 12

85. Data relating to the dropout rates of girls owing to pregnancy and the indirect costs to education that might impede the access of women and girls to education, particularly in female-headed households, is not available.

86. No information is available that assesses the impact the Children Act, 2012 has had. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago also regrets that the Adolescent Mothers Programme was incorrectly labelled "the Early Motherhood Programme" in its initial report.

87. The Adolescent Mothers Programme has been structured and implemented to support those who have become teenage mothers. The programme operates through five centres located throughout Trinidad and Tobago where adolescent mothers are afforded opportunities to engage in technical/vocational training, or to finish or continue their academic careers. These centres provide incentives to encourage enrolment, including day-care services, counselling and parenting courses. Since this programme's scope does not extend to preventative measures, its performance cannot be assessed in terms of such.

88. The Ministry of Education allows for re-entry into school for students after they have given birth.

89. Measures have been taken to develop age-appropriate educational training on sexual and reproductive health. A major step to mainstream teaching on this matter comes in the form of the implementation of the Primary Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme by the Ministry of Education.

Overview

90. The main themes involved with the HFLE programme are:

- Self and Interpersonal Relationships;
- Sexuality and Sexual Health;
- Eating and Fitness; and
- Managing the Environment.

Summary

91. The programme aims to inculcate knowledge with regard to forming and keeping healthy relationships with the self, family and peers, as well as stressing the importance of building the individual capacity to acknowledge and recognize the basic criteria optimal for reproductive health and physical well-being. It also allows for awareness with reference to the expression of sexuality and sexual choices. In addition to these areas, nutrition and exercise, as well as managing the environment in a sustainable way are also contained in the programme as a means of including all aspects of the individual's developmental processes and for the holistic growth of physical and mental wellness.

92. The Course Outline is arranged in three levels:

- Level One — Infants Year One and Year Two
- Level Two — Standards One, Two and Three
- Level Three — Standards Four and Five

93. In brief, the Ministry of Education hopes that pupils will be able to deal constructively with problems and issues that arise, as well as make decisions with regard to their health and well-being by assessing a range of options available. The programme aims to promote creative thinking; interpersonal relationship skills and negotiation skills, especially when it comes to their individual needs and concerns.

94. With regard to the question on measures in place to improve the enrolment of women in engineering courses, options to pursue the latter are equally available to both genders. Enrolment of women in engineering courses, however, remains a matter of personal choice. No measures are in place to ensure such action, as there are no barriers to the enrolment of women in engineering courses. The fact that tertiary education is free reinforces the point that accessibility to engineering courses is determined only by the perceived capability to do so, i.e. based on academic merit. As Table 1 in Annex II demonstrates, graduation from engineering programmes at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine campus has yielded a critical mass each year, beginning in the 2011/2012 academic year. It is important to note that graduation from the faculties of Science and Technology and Medical Sciences have also disproportionately favoured women. Similarly, in 2013, 36.9 per cent of graduates from the Engineering Department of the University of Trinidad and Tobago were women. **See Annex II for statistical data.**

Employment

Question 13

95. With reference to the question regarding equal pay, the Equal Opportunities Act, 2000 generally prohibits employers from discriminating against employees or prospective employees on the basis of their sex, race, ethnicity, geographical origin, religion, marital status or disability. While the Act does not expressly speak to equal pay, it does generally prohibit employers from discrimination in the terms and conditions of employment afforded to their employees. The Equal Opportunities Act also makes provision for women who feel they have been discriminated against, to file a complaint form with regard to this particular grievance.

96. Although there are no remedies specifically for sexual harassment as sexual harassment is not a criminal offence, there are remedies for criminal offences that can be prosecuted such as stalking, grabbing and touching without consent.

97. The Steering Committee for Action against Discrimination and Sexual Harassment was unable to complete its mandate and therefore the national study was not commissioned. There are no immediate plans to conduct this study on the matter of sexual harassment in the workplace. The Chief Personnel Officer and the Ministry of Public Administration have however commenced work on a draft policy regarding sexual harassment. Updates on this project are not available at this time as it is in its early stages.

Question 14

98. The category of worker employed in any capacity of a domestic nature, including that of a chauffeur, gardener or handyman in or about a private dwelling house and paid by the householder is excluded from the scope of the Industrial Relations Act, 1972 (IRA).

99. The Court has the responsibility for deciding whether a person is a worker under the IRA. The fact that domestic workers have been excluded by the definition of 'worker' in the IRA has been an issue of contention for their association. The Parliament took note and the Minimum Wages Order, Legal Notice No. 40 of 1999 and the Maternity Protection Act, No. 4 of 1998 included domestic workers as employees, guaranteeing them the same rights and benefits as other workers.

100. In the fiscal year 2011/2012, the Ministry identified nine priority areas for implementation. These priority areas are aligned to the Medium Term Policy Framework 2011-2014. One of these priorities is the creation of a Register of Domestic Workers.

101. The Register of Domestic Workers is a database that falls under the exclusive purview of the Ministry. It will facilitate the provision of developmental assistance for both employers and workers and allow all to access beneficial services provided by the Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development. This includes those provided by the National Employment Service (NES) and the Ministry's Enterprise Development Division (E.D.D.). Pertinent information on domestic workers in the sector will include:

- The name of the domestic worker;
- The name and address of the employer; and
- The terms and conditions of employment including the type of work.

102. While completing the registration process is an entirely voluntary exercise, all domestic workers and their employers would be invited to complete the registration form. This database is being launched as part of the nation's corporate commitment to continuously promote the empowerment of every citizen.

103. The purpose of the register is twofold. Firstly, the establishment and maintenance of this database will facilitate the easy collection of labour market statistics on domestic employers and employees. The information received will in turn guide the Ministry's policies and decision-making in creating a beneficial situation for all the tripartite partners.

104. Secondly, the register will aid in the proactive monitoring activities of the Ministry's Labour Inspectorate Unit to ensure compliance with existing labour legislation. In a globalized world, where competition among developed and emerging economies has intensified, the Trinidad and Tobago labour market will work best when there is an institutional environment that ensures decent work, income and social protection for all workers.

Health

Question 15

105. There is one programme geared towards the age group of 15-24. The RapPort programme provides youth with accurate, relevant information to enable them to make informed choices, increase their awareness of sexual risk reduction behaviour and increase knowledge of safer sex practices. Other programmes are also administered by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, albeit these are general in nature. These include:

- The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV/AIDS Programme, the aim of which is to reduce the transmission of HIV infection from the mother to the unborn infant. This strategy gives the infant the greatest chance for an HIV free survival.
- The Antiretroviral Treatment Programme which aims to provide antiretroviral treatment for persons infected with HIV or diagnosed as having AIDS, with the ultimate goal of reducing the morbidity and mortality due to HIV infection. This program also deals with:
- Treatment of women who are diagnosed HIV positive in pregnancy to prevent transmission to the infant;
- Treatment of victims of sexual abuse within 72 hours of the assault to prevent transmission of HIV and other STIs, and
- Treatment of occupational exposure to HIV.

106. Over the years there has been some level of decline in the coordinated efforts to address HIV/AIDS. However in 2016, the Office of the Prime Minister has taken over the mandate to address the issues of HIV/AIDS. In this renewed focus on this epidemic, OPM has absorbed the Ministry of Health's HIV/AIDS Coordinating Unit in an effort to mainstream a responsible HIV/AIDS agenda.

107. Information in respect of the percentage of the national budget allocated to women's health and the prevalence of cervical and breast cancer will be provided in a subsequent submission given the time required to collate the data.

108. Data on Maternal Mortality Rate:

Maternal Mortality Rate, per 100,000 live Births, 2008-2010

Year	*Mortality Rate*
2008	55.3
2009	45.7
2010	52.4

Source: Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago.

Question 16

109. Information on the incidence of unsafe abortion and its impact on women's health is not currently available. There are currently no plans to legalize abortion on other grounds including severe fetal impairment and where pregnancy is as a result of rape or incest.

Rural women

Question 17

110. In March 2014, a series of interactive Business Clinics for Women in collaboration with Governmental Agencies, Civil Society and the Private Sector was held in four (4) communities across the nation to commemorate International Women's Day. The main objective of these clinics was to celebrate the economic achievement of women from rural communities. The Business Clinics Series took the form of exhibitions, individual mentorship/coaching sessions, lectures, and an award segment which was designed specifically to assist women in advancing and competing in both the local and international marketplace.

Agriculture and Natural Resource Development

111. The Draft National Policy on Gender and Development seeks to integrate gender equality goals into strategies aimed at increased food security and natural resource exploitation, as a means of ensuring the wellbeing of women and men, their sustainable livelihoods and equitable access to productive resources. This is to be supported by a study of national agricultural data, disaggregated by sex to identify the gender differential with regard to ownership, earnings, crop selection, marketing and other aspects of agriculture and to inform gender-awareness initiatives required to enhance the Agricultural sector.

The Women in Harmony Agriculture/Landscaping programme

112. Women between the ages of twenty six (26) to forty-five (45) years undergo twelve weeks of training in various agricultural and landscaping techniques which help provide women with skills for self-sustainability. Entrepreneurship development is also a key module of this programme. Start-up kits and other forms of technical and financial assistance are given to those women who have shown the potential to own businesses.

Flood Damage Assistance for Crop Farmers

113. The Ministry of Agriculture provides assistance to crop farmers whose crops have been lost or damaged due to flooding to assist with the replanting process.

Community Development Fund

114. This is one of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts' flagship Programmes for alleviating poverty in communities. The goal of all projects under this Fund is to initiate sustainable livelihoods for the groups and individuals involved towards closing the poverty gap. A key characteristic of the CDF is the technical assistance component which focuses on the institutional strengthening of the NGO network and other community based organizations.

Youth Involvement in Agriculture

115. A number of programmes and initiatives targeting youths are conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture. These programmes seek to provide individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 with the knowledge and skills that enable participation in agricultural activities, both at home and as a profession. Both theoretical and practical experiences in various agricultural activities are provided.

The Agricultural Incentive Programme

116. This programme which is under the Ministry of Agriculture is designed to provide support to the various agricultural sub-sectors with the intention of boosting the overall efficiency and productivity of the agricultural sector. The aim of this revised Incentive Programme is to better manage the support that the Ministry extends to farmers and fisher folk, and to maximize benefits to the farming community.

Marketing Assistance for Farmers

117. The National Agricultural Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO) provides marketing facilities and support services to individuals and businesses involved in the agri-business sector. It also assists in identifying new market opportunities, both locally and abroad, for agricultural products.

The Agricultural Development Bank

118. The aim of this initiative is to facilitate sustainable socio-economic development of agribusinesses and rural sectors via loans and through strategic partnerships with stakeholders (farmers, agriculturists), delivering cutting-edge financial products and services. Special consideration is being given to young people in Tobago who wish to become agriculturists to encourage and maintain their interest in agriculture.

119. The study referred to in Paragraph 83 of the Report was among the strategies to be implemented on the approval of the Draft Policy on Gender and Development. No update on this particular study can be provided.

120. The interests of rural women are most easily and effectively pursued through a series of Non-Governmental bodies that aggregate their issues and grievances and

make representations to International Organizations and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

- Rural women of Trinidad and Tobago enjoy membership in the Country Women of the World through the membership of the Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute. **Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute** has unit associations in every county in Trinidad and in Tobago and contributes towards the development of national policies through their representation on national bodies. The Federation also benefits from financial support from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The Federation also offers services related to education, training, tutoring as well as the provision of other services that seek to improve socio-economic status of rural women.

- The **Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women in Trinidad and Tobago** acts as an advocate and support for all women's organizations in the country inclusive of rural women and is committed to the aims of UN Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Over one hundred organizations form this umbrella body including several grassroots women's organizations affording rural women further avenues to contribute to national development.

- **The Network of Rural Women Producers (NRWP)** is the Trinidad and Tobago chapter of the Caribbean Network of Rural Women Producers (CANROP). NRWP has been in existence for the past 11 years. The main goals of the Network are to provide rural women with access to credit for micro-business projects, to contribute to government policies that are sensitive to and supportive of the special needs of rural women producers, to contribute to the elimination of the gender bias in the ownership of land, ensuring that women have the same opportunities as men to own property. The Network also seeks to provide marketing support for rural women producers and to offer training, research, technical support and outreach services. NRWP is an active member of the Network of NGOs for the Advancement of Women in Trinidad and Tobago.

- As it relates to the Draft National Policy on Gender and Development, rural women were afforded the opportunity to participate in the policy-making process. Rural women were also engaged in the process of developing the periodic reports to the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

121. There are several programmes that support the advancement of the rural women. Some of these are implemented on a national level and can be equally accessed by men and non-rural women. Education and access to information are facilitated by the following programmes:

- **The Community Education (Skills Development) Programme** is a major component of the Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts' portfolio of Social Action Programmes. It is designed to address the domestic needs of householders by equipping them with skills to enable them to engage in the home-based production of goods and services. This both reduces household expenditure and allows for more effective use of financial

resources. This programme is executed extensively in rural and sub-urban communities.

- **The Retraining Programme** offered by the Youth Training and Employment Partnership Programme (YTEPP) is aimed at enhancing the opportunities of participants to engage in sustainable and self-employment, especially as a matter of second resort. The programme offers training in basic vocational skills to participants of any age, placing emphasis on the development of positive work habits, attitudes and the acquisition of entrepreneurial, interpersonal and communication skills. This programme gives its participants the option to not only leave unsuccessful and unfulfilling jobs, but the power to choose a career path more in line with their goals and aspirations.
- **Community Computer Literacy Programme** is offered to various communities particularly in the rural districts. This programme equips participants with basic computer knowledge and skills in effort to increase access to information and general educational opportunities.

122. Women in Trinidad and Tobago enjoy unfettered access to banking services. However, gendered practices with regard to land and property ownership have resulted in women experiencing greater difficulty than men in securing loans from commercial banks due to the lack of collateral. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has made provisions to address this situation by offering support mechanisms for entrepreneurs in Trinidad and Tobago. Women desirous of engaging in or expanding their business activities can access financial support as well as capacity building initiatives through the Community Development Fund, NEDCO and the Tobago House of Assembly's Enterprise Assistance Fund. Women involved in Agriculture and Agro Processing business activities may seek assistance from the Agricultural Development Bank.

123. Health which necessarily includes mental health, and social protection are covered by:

- The Domestic Violence Hotline which gives victims of domestic violence access to relevant authorities, counselling, referrals to shelters and information on the legal recourse, regardless of physical location. This toll free service is operated 24 hours a day, seven days per week inclusive of public holidays. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has also produced a Domestic Violence Investigative and Procedural Manual for the police officers in Trinidad and Tobago.
- Shelters which are managed by Non-governmental Organizations with the aid of Government subventions. Several of these shelters are located in rural communities
- Rural women victims/survivors of gender based violence can access legal services through the Legal Aid Department, and the Ombudsman. The services of the ombudsman are made available in rural communities on specific days of the month. Additionally, citizens are afforded access to the court and other social interventions.
- The Targeted Conditional Cash Transfer Programme which provides social protection through the promotion of nutrition and food security to vulnerable households for an initial period of two (2) years.

- Grants provided by the Social Welfare Division of Ministry of Social Development and Family Services include:
  - The Senior Citizen's Pension
  - The Public Assistance Grant
  - The Disability Assistance Grant
  - The Medical Equipment grant which assists recipients with the purchase of medical aids
  - Special Child Grant
  - Household Items Grant
  - Home H lp Aid
  - Dietary Grant
  - Clothing Grant
  - Funeral Grant
  - Education Grant
  - House Rent
  - School Supplies Grant
  - Urgent Temporary Assistance

  Note: All these services are available to rural women as well as women in urban areas.

Disadvantaged groups of women

Question 18

124. 2011 Census data indicates that 50.2 per cent of all people with disabilities are women. Recent policy documents have recognized the need to conduct research on the intersection of gender issues and disability, including challenges faced by mothers with physical and mobility disabilities.

125. The National Enrichment Centre for Persons with Disabilities was opened in July 2015 and is geared towards improving the quality of life for all persons living with disabilities. It provides a number of services including speech, physical and aqua therapies, and vocational and skills training.

126. Information in respect of the extent to which FHHs are disproportionately affected by poverty and access to health services, education and employment for all women living in poverty will be provided in a subsequent submission given the need for additional time to collate same.

Natural disasters

Question 19

127. Trinidad and Tobago is susceptible to a number of disasters, all of which require specific action and contingency plans. The diagram provided in Annex III states the types of disasters that Trinidad and Tobago could experience, and was prepared by the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM), the government agency tasked with coordinating disaster relief efforts, proposing and developing related legislation, implementing governmental policy, and incorporating regional and international disaster into domestic legislation and practices.

128. Given its mandate, the ODPM is a member of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), and has incorporated the principles and aims of the Hyogo Framework for Action and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction into its Disaster Risk Management (DRM) strategy. As such, the ODPM has recently started approaching DRM with a view to catering to gender considerations. Disaster Risk Guidelines for Gender were drafted in 2013 and are still under stakeholder review.